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SUBJECT: TAIWAN'S NEW COUNTERTERRORISM OFFICE

Classified By: AIT DIRECTOR DOUGLAS PAAL, REASON 1.5 B/D

1. (C) AIT/T Deputy Director Keegan hosted officials from Taiwan's new Counterterrorism Office (CTO) to lunch on March 29 in order to learn the function of the office and how AIT might interface with it. Taiwan participants included National Security Council (NSC) Deputy Secretary General (Steve) Wang Hsi-tien, NSC Officer Mao Huei-ming, CTO Director Kuo Lin-wu, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFO) representative to the CTO (Herman) Chiu Tai-chin. The report below is a readout of the lunch conversation.

2. (C) Established in November 2004, the CTO operates under the Executive Yuan (EY) and reports directly to the EY Secretary General Cho Jung-tai. In addition to the Chief and

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Deputy Chief, the CTO has six officers representing six different agencies -- Taiwan Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Health, Ministry of Justice, Atomic Energy Commission, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, and Science and Tech Advisory Group -- and six researchers. CTO has a broader mandate than just CT. Wang Hsi-tien, who repeatedly compared the CTO to the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, described the CTO as a fusion of the intelligence and operational facets of CT, as well as being responsible for dealing with the aftermath of a terrorist attack. He explained how CTO would coordinate an interagency response to a variety of natural disasters and epidemics and to terrorist attacks with chemical, biological, radiological and other WMD. After any disaster occurred, the CTO would be involved in determining the appropriate response, whether police, environmental, health, or military.

3. (C) Wang stated that Jemaah Islamiya was the most likely CT threat to Taiwan, although there were possible threats from other terrorist organizations. The discussions also touched on the possibility of a terrorist "decapitation" attack by Mainland China.

4. (C) The Taiwan officials were eager to discuss the CTO and its functions. They suggested both sides might benefit from increased cooperation and information sharing. They also sought U.S. support and assistance in developing intelligence contacts with third country and regional groups, such as national intelligence agencies of ASEAN countries. AIT responded with interest to the suggestions on cooperation, but suggested that Taiwan might have to first prove itself a real player in the CT game before it could hope for much cooperation from other countries.

5. (C) The guests also discussed Taiwan's new Technology Protection Law and the State Department-sponsored Export Control and Border Security (EXBS) Workshop held last week in Taipei. Chiu and Mao, who attended the workshop on behalf of CTO and NSC, both stated that they found the EXBS training to be valuable and worthwhile for Taiwan. They agreed, however, that Taiwan's Technology Protection Law needed at the very least to include specific reference to the strategic high tech commodities already identified in Taiwan's Export Control Law. This part of the discussion ended with an update on the status of the P2S5 seized from North Korea, now held in Kaohsiung. Experts had met and determined the only safe way to destroy the material would be by fire, a little bit at a time, and a Taiwan company has been identified as qualified to do the work. It would probably take five or so months before all the material was destroyed.

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